



Separatism vs. Integration: Can Separate Ever Be Equal?

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America, the world's only truly successful large-scale multiethnic national experiment, is threatened by separatism, masquerading as multiculturalism and camouflaged by the language of social justice. Today, multiculturalism accentuates ethnic and racial differences while undervaluing commonality and dismissing the complexity, vibrancy, and unique adaptability of America.

The major historical exception to the characteristic assimilation process that most groups underwent in the past is black America's enslaved involuntary immigrants. Once freed, blacks were still constrained by social exclusion and legal segregation. Now, however, separatism is predominantly self-initiated, taking institutional form in separate departments and dorms at universities, for example, or in racial affinity groups within corporations.

This kind of resistance to assimilation impedes full participation in the U.S. economy and society. No effective separate, self-sufficient ethnic or racial entity has ever existed outside of the mainstream American economy. Moreover, while adhering to a mindset of insular group cohesiveness based on race, rather than individuality, black America aspires to the benefits of the mainstream. Black activists demand race-based government funding, legal exceptions, affirmative action, and other kinds of special treatment (without accountability), epitomized today by proposals for racial reparations.

Through the concept of "disparate impact," which explains statistical inequalities among groups in terms of discrimination, identity politics has largely succeeded in replacing the foundational American aspiration of equality under the law with the

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demand for equality of outcomes. Unsurprisingly, the demand for unequal and preferential treatment for blacks has done little to reduce inequality of wealth, income, and education.

The paradox of racial identity was perfectly captured in the classroom of radical white professor Staughton Lynd at Spelman College, a historically black women's college. In 1962 Professor Lynd began his American history class with the pilgrims at Plymouth Rock. A student asked, "What has that got to do with me?" The next year, Lynd began the course narrative with the slave ships. This time a young woman asked, "How come you're teaching us this special history?"¹ The classroom had devolved into one of fractured personal identity. Lost is Martin Luther King's prescription for black America in 1965:

When the thrust changes from desegregation to integration . . . one of [the black person's] chief responsibilities is to prepare himself to live in an integrated society . . . We must be able to face up honestly to our own shortcomings. We must act in such a way as to make possible a coming together of white people and colored people on the basis of a real harmony of interests and understanding. We seek an integration based on mutual respect.²

The Evolution of Black Separatism (1787-Present)

Black separatism evolved through major inflection points—antebellum America, the Civil War, Reconstruction, Southern legal segregation, the Great Migration north, and the civil rights movement of the 1960s—to its current status.

The white North was both anti-slavery and anti-black, as demonstrated by its willingness to fight a bloody war against slavery while remaining terrified of an increase in its statistically irrelevant black population. The Oregon Constitution of 1857 even included a black exclusion law. "The views of the North on [black equality before the Civil War]," wrote the eminent historian C. Vann Woodward, "were in no important respect different from those of the South—and never had been."³

¹Personal interview with Staughton and Alice Lynd on November 11, 2011; Gene Dattel, *Reckoning with Race: America's Failure* (Encounter, 2017), 153; Alice Lynd, Staughton Lynd, *Stepping Stones: Memoir of a Life Together* (Lexington Books, 2009).

²Martin Luther King, Jr., "Statement on Ending the Bus Boycott," December 20, 1956, <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/statement-ending-bus-boycott>

³C. Vann Woodward, *What Was Freedom's Price?* ed. David G. Sansing (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 1978), 113.

The North imposed a racial containment policy of keeping blacks in the South. As a result, the black population of the North remained under 2 percent between 1865 and World War I, while millions of white immigrants streamed into the American North, making the region multiethnic but unified behind an impenetrable “color line.” In 1900, 90 percent of all black Americans lived in the South. Overt legal segregation in the South, an unwelcoming, exclusionary North, and black attitudes fostered a fully separate black society within America. Segregated public accommodations, secondary schools, colleges, universities, churches, neighborhoods, and even all-black towns necessarily followed in the South.

The giants of nineteenth century black history—Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) and Frederick Douglass (1818-1895)—grappled with the easily observable separate societies. Washington advocated a separate black economy; Douglass opted for integration. For both men, economic success meant survival, independence, and power. The freedmen’s labor in the cotton fields, wrote Douglass in 1880, “was worth more than the sword, ballot-boxes, or bayonets.” In 1895, Washington said, “No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized.” Washington’s self-help formula envisioned a stepping stone for black laborers rising “to the level of owning stores, operating factories, loaning white people money, and manufacturing goods that the white man needs.”⁴

By the 1880s, Douglass issued a clarion call for “diffusion” into American society. Racial separation, he realized, must yield to assimilation: “I adopt the suggestion . . . that *diffusion* is the true policy for the colored people . . . A few colored people scattered among large white communities are easily accepted by such communities . . . Our policy should be to unite with the great mass of the American people in all their activities and resolve to fall or flourish with our common country. We cannot afford to draw the color line in politics, trade, education, manners, religion, or civilization.”⁵

World War I ended the isolation of blacks in the South, but not racial separatism. The war-induced labor shortage gave impetus to the Great Migration to the North. Black migrants found mostly bottom rung industrial jobs, which provided an income boost when compared to

⁴Frederick Douglass, ““The Unknown Loyal Dead,” Arlington National Cemetery, May 30, 1871, <https://deadconfederates.com/2015/05/25/frederick-douglass-on-decoration-day-1871-5/>; Booker T. Washington, “Booker T. Washington Delivers the 1895 Atlanta Compromise Speech,” History Matters, September 18, 1895, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/39/>; Booker T. Washington, “The South and Lynch Law,” *Southern Workmen* (November, 1893),

⁵Douglass quote, from his speech, “The Nation’s Problem” (April 16, 1889) in Washington, DC, <https://me.me/i/we-cannot-afford-to-draw-the-color-line-in-politics-no-4432259>

subsistence farming, but little opportunity for further economic advancement. Enfranchisement brought a political voice, but race riots, residential segregation, and substandard and (*de facto*) segregated schools also greeted their arrival in the urban North. The black ghetto was a breeding ground for intense frustration which would predictably and violently erupt.

Black leaders began to encourage separatism. W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963), an elitist scholar, would vacillate between favoring integration and opposing it. Du Bois envisioned a dual character for black America. The black man, he said, “would not Africanize America, for America has much to teach the world. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism.” His views on economic progress, a fuzzy brand of Marxism, were never clearly expressed. DuBois, whose prolific career spanned two centuries, undertook the ultimate act of separation—immigration to Ghana.

A Jamaican native, Marcus Garvey (1887-1940), the “patron saint of black nationalism and the progenitor of black power,” amassed an extensive following in the urban North. An admirer of Booker T. Washington’s philosophy of self-help, economic self-sufficiency, and racial solidarity, the flamboyant Garvey advocated emigration to Africa via his organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, and Pan-African unity. In 1924, he harangued students of Howard University about his Back-to-Africa movement: “If Asia is good for the Asians, if Europe is good for the Europeans, and America is good for the Americans, we are going to have ours in Africa.”⁶ Interestingly, according to his biographer Judith Stein, Garvey never set foot on African soil. Garvey’s attempt to start a shipping line to transport blacks to Africa was doomed from the start, and riddled with fraud and incompetence. Although Garvey’s fantasy dissolved, he is memorialized in Harlem, London, and his native Jamaica. The presidential administrations of both Ronald Reagan and Barack Obama rejected requests by Jamaican officials to posthumously pardon Garvey for a 1923 mail fraud conviction.

Malcolm X (1925-1965), a revered figure then and now, despised racial integration as a form of tokenism. At Michigan State University in 1963, he was explicit: “I’m not coming in here to speak as a Baptist or a Methodist or a Democrat or a Republican . . . I am speaking as a Black man. The new type of Black man, he doesn’t want integration. Not segregation, [but] separation . . .

⁶Judith Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class In Modern Society* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 10.

Separation is when you have your own; you control your own economy; you control your own politics; you control your own society.”⁷

The U.S. government, Malcolm said, should “divide a separate part of the country into which our people can migrate.” He wanted a form of limited reparations—payment for travel to “our homeland” and the equipment to farm. The monetary support he envisioned would last for only “twenty to twenty-five years until we are in a position to be completely independent.” (Echoing Malcolm X’s proposal in 1989, Keith Ellison, a black third-year law student at the University of Minnesota, recommended several Southern states be designated a black region. Ellison is currently the attorney general of Minnesota.)

Stokely Carmichael (1941-1998), the chairman of the Southern Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), became a public face of separatism. His phrase “Black Power” reverberated. “We want black power,” he shouted five times to a crowd on June 16, 1966 in Greenwood, Mississippi. Whites would be officially expelled from SNCC by the end of 1966. After being fired from SNCC, Carmichael emigrated to Africa and changed his name to Kwame Ture in 1969. There, he would align with the Guinean politician Sékou Touré, the dictator responsible for the death of thousands of his countrymen. Carmichael succumbed to prostate cancer in 1998, blaming his affliction on “American imperialism.”

The Black Panther movement would make a dramatic appearance in the 1960s. Its leaders emphasized black power and black pride, and threatened violence, but lacked any abiding framework for solving complex social problems. A philosophy based almost exclusively on grievance, anger, egotism, frustration, and racial separatism falters when faced with the practical reality of policy implementation and accountability. Protest movements seldom build constructive societies. The declining relevance or disappearance of the black civil rights groups—NAACP, SCLC, SNCC, and CORE—attests to their post-Civil Rights failure. The recent Black Lives Matter movement is destined to meet the same fate.

Moreover, despite the rhetoric of racial self-sufficiency, a viable black economy never developed parallel to the American mainstream. The One United Bank in 2019 solicited business from blacks with the slogan, “Black Money Matters,” but of the 134 black-owned banks formed between 1888 and 1934, seventy failed in the Depression of the 1930s and only a few small ones remain, among them One United. The various campaigns to “Shop Black” were ineffective over time. John and Maggie Anderson undertook a doomed mission

⁷“Twenty Million Black people in a Political, Economic and Mental Prison,” Michigan State University, January 23, 1963. Cited in *Malcolm X: The Last Speeches*, ed. Bruce Perry (Pathfinder, Second Printing, 1989).

to “buy black” in Chicago in their Empowerment Experiment, as recorded in her book, *Our black year: one family's quest to buy Black in America's racially divided economy* (2012). Her mission to create a self-sufficient economic submarket failed.

Separatism in the Civil Rights Era

De jure inequality was removed through legislation, court decisions, and changing social attitudes. As schools were desegregated and students were bused in order to achieve racial balance, blacks were ambivalent about integration. In 1967, the research firm Daniel Yankelovich, Inc. conducted a survey, “Integration as a goal for Negroes.” Only 12 percent of blacks wanted full integration in jobs, housing, and education. The vast number, 77 percent, wanted limited integration and 5 percent wanted none.

By the 1960s, America’s corporations and higher education institutions, moved by the integrationist ideal of the postwar civil rights movement, had begun to seriously recruit black Americans. “We’ve found,” Carl Haugen of Chase Manhattan Bank told *Newsweek*, “that we can no longer wait for Negroes to apply for jobs. We have to go and seek them out of high schools and colleges.” The editors of *Fortune* magazine published *The Negro and the City* (1968), which contained an extensive list of companies prioritizing the hiring of blacks.⁸

To the extent that these efforts at institutional integration circumvented standard employment practices through racial preferences, it is not surprising that they had the perverse effect of reinforcing racial separatism, at least on a psychological level. More than forty years of corporate diversity efforts (diversity training is estimated to be an \$8 billion industry), have not yielded optimal results. On the whole, blacks tend to fill human resources or other diversity related slots, which, indeed, many blacks seem to prefer, possibly as potential vantage points from which to advance additional diversity hiring and promotion.⁹

Similar efforts to recruit blacks occurred on American college campuses in the 1960s, with similarly perverse outcomes. The small pipeline of qualified applicants proved to be a serious obstacle to increasing black enrollment. Rather than incrementally increase the number of black students as qualified candidates became available, elite colleges lowered admissions criteria, placing black

⁸“Business Reclaims Human Resources,” in *The Negro and the City* (New York: Time Life, 1968).

⁹Ellen McGirt, “Leading While Black,” *Fortune*, January 22, 2016, <https://fortune.com/longform/black-executives-men-c-suite/>; John D. Skrentny, *After Civil Rights: Racial Realism in the New American Workplace* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

students in untenable academic circumstances. Many blacks dropped out, but those that stayed became alienated, finding comfort in various forms of black separatism and demanding segregated degree programs, clubs, and campus facilities. The result has been the “neo-segregation” of American college campuses, now documented in the 2019 report *Separate but Equal, Again: Neo-Segregation in American Higher Education*. The authors of the report found that out of 173 schools surveyed, 42 percent offered segregated residences, 46 percent offered segregated orientation programs, and 72 percent hosted segregated graduation ceremonies.¹⁰

Worst yet, campus neo-segregation included the creation of academic departments and programs of study (typically called African, Black, or Afro-American Studies) that often emphasized black marginalization at the expense of scholarly methods, logic, and the sound evaluation of evidence. These programs were eventually followed by a stream of “studies” disciplines focused on other purportedly “marginalized” groups and similarly prone to reject outside critiques.

Despite criticism, black oriented programs proliferated. Indiana University sociology professor Fabio Rojas has documented that “from 1969 to 1974 approximately 120 degree programs in African American Studies were created, along with dozens of other black studies units, such as research centers and non-degree programs, plus professional organizations and journals devoted to the field.”¹¹ To illustrate the transformation, Yale offered just one course in African American history in the mid-1960s, a seminar titled “The Negro in American History,” and three courses in African studies. By 2016, a Yale student could find forty-nine courses in African American studies and forty-five courses in African studies.¹²

Although black elites have excelled in every aspect of American life, the mass of black America, with opportunities now available, is hindered by black separatism which resists necessary concessions to assimilation. Efforts to embrace blacks within the economic and societal mainstream have been significantly impeded by the policies, programs, and regulations implemented to manage the inadequate supply of appropriately competitive blacks.

¹⁰*Separate but Equal, Again: Neo-Segregation in American Higher Education* (New York, N.Y., National Association of Scholars: April, 2019), https://www.nas.org/blogs/dicta/separate_but_equal_again_neo-segregation_at_yale

¹¹Fabio Rojas, *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

¹²Dattel, *Reckoning with Race*, 218.

Current Status

The overt solicitation of blacks under various types of policies known broadly as “affirmative action,” “diversity hiring,” or “inclusion” has intensified black racial grievance and fostered a permanent sense of victimhood. It appears that each generation has increasingly internalized the idea of historical, systemic injustice to African Americans. While multiculturalists pay lip service to the concept of non-white unity, black Americans tend to place themselves at the top of the victimhood hierarchy. The artificial alliance with other non-white minorities, women, and LGBTQ affiliates is a ploy to increase political influence, but black separatists insist that the country’s original sin—race-based slavery and overt legal segregation—confers special status.

In the twenty-first century, black spokesmen, interpreting the world through a distorted racial lens, eschew self-examination. This immunity to self-criticism seriously impairs accountability and corrective measures; all negative critique—either by blacks or whites—is condemned.

Universities theoretically provide the ideal place for an effective racially mixed environment. But black separatism destructively intervenes. Rather than promote respectful interaction among students and encourage curiosity in the pursuit of common goals, the campus racial and ethnic cultural centers highlight separatism and advance an anti-white, anti-Western agenda.

Blacks want mentors and teachers “who look like themselves.” Demands for self-segregated residential dorms are increasing, from the University of Connecticut to the University of Oregon. From freshman orientation through graduation, tomorrow’s leaders are inducted into ideological ethnic and racial silos. Yale’s freshman orientation program, “Cultural Connections,” is chiefly restricted to minorities and again is imbued with anti-white ideology. This initial introduction sets the tone at Yale (and elsewhere) for subordinating the individual to the group. Separate symbolic graduations at high profile Yale, Harvard, and Princeton are influential and divisive. Docile university administrators, terrified of demonstrations and bad publicity, hearken back to the claim of sociologists St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, Jr. in *Black Metropolis* (1945): “So far [white] Chicagoans view Negro-white relations negatively—solely in terms of preventing a riot.”

Quotas rather than merit-based standards reign. Universities and corporations publish targets for “diversity and inclusion” goals which reflect group, not individual, recognition. Even undergraduate organizations have succumbed to the quota system. The Yale University student newspaper, the *Yale Daily News*

(YDN), accused itself of violating diversity standards. In a fit of self-flagellation, “the oldest campus daily newspaper” confessed to “Our Diversity Problem.”¹³ Describing the results of a survey of staff inducted for the coming years, the editorial board bemoaned the absence or underrepresentation of “Latinx . . . black, Middle Eastern, or Native American on its managing board of 2020.”¹⁴ Embarrassingly, a guilty plea emerged—the survey showed editorial board composition—59 percent white and 30 percent ethnic Asian. (There is, of course, no room in the victim hierarchy for Asians. Outstanding achievement levels have rendered them no more “multicultural”—i.e. politically useful—than white ethnics, at least in the context of higher education.)

Racial separatism knows no bounds. Black educator Beverly Tatum’s popular books, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* and *Can We Talk about Race?* (2007) set rules of engagement for interracial conversations in the college setting. Rather than engaging in a civil, respectful, and constructive learning experience, one has to abide by a rigid protocol. She advocates semester length “structured dialogues” and “structured opportunities for the affirmation of identity.” These dialogues would dwell on the “institutionalization of race and racism in the U.S.” and issues of white “power and privilege.” Essentially, white students would be subjected to a racial deracination process and black students would be trained to see the allegedly intrinsic nature of white oppression. “[R]eparative . . . justice” would be featured. For Tatum, significant “cultural centers” should address “the need to affirm marginalized identities.” Unsurprisingly, the “historically Black college experience” is her model for implementing racial “empowerment,” essentially advocating a college within a college. Nowhere does this former president of historically black Spelman College recognize an organic process of racial interaction, or for that matter the importance of acquiring critical thinking ability, using objective analysis, developing a functional skill set, learning to operate in a competitive environment, and seeking postgraduate connections for career opportunities.

The rejection of integration with whites by black elites like Tatum is predictable, given the derision of what is perceived as “white culture” in recent race scholarship. An article in the Howard University *Journal of Communications* (2017) bizarrely challenges the conventional concept of “civility.” White use of the term civility was deemed condescending and

¹³Editorial Board, “News’ View: Our diversity problem,” *Yale Daily News*, October 29, 2018.

¹⁴*Ibid*

dubbed “White-informed civility.” Through their standards of civility, whites are supposedly trying to “erase racial identity” and attempting to “own the space.”¹⁵

The New York City Chancellor of Education, Richard Carranza, has brought these noxious ideas into the city’s public school system through bias training of faculty and staff to “protect” black and Hispanic students. This training employs a diagram castigating individualism, objectivity, and perfectionism as “White Supremacy Culture.” A survey purporting to identify “White Privilege” in New York schools is blatantly divisive, and assumes uniform life experiences among all whites. And how can schools instill high expectations in black students while preaching pervasive victimhood.¹⁶

Hypersensitive allegations of white microaggressions and “implicit bias” are pervasive. The University of California has produced a “microaggressions list” that includes such “racist” comments as “I believe the most qualified person should get the job,” “America is the land of opportunity,” and “Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough.”¹⁷ Outside of the field of education, too, black separatism often asserts itself in frivolous, farcical, yet still damaging ways. In 2019, for example, the National Basketball Association (NBA) capitulated to a black athlete’s demand to change the name of team “owners” to “governors,” because of the allegedly painful connection of slave owners to team owners.

The racial integration muddle is on frequent display, as in the June 2019 Democratic presidential debate. Candidate Kamala Harris dramatically attacked candidate Joe Biden for opposing the discredited school “busing” experiment. Senator Harris, deliberately misrepresenting the effectiveness of busing, then reversed herself by meekly advocating a conversation about, not a reversion to, busing. In 1965, even Roy Wilkins, executive editor of the NAACP and tireless combatant of racial segregation, opposed busing and “racial compulsion.”

In another instance of blatant pandering for black votes, Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts promised \$50 billion dollars for Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Black Americans laud such gestures as empowerment and cheer the putative self-segregated comfort level afforded black students in

¹⁵C. Kyle Rudick, Kathryn B. Golsan, “White Civility. Civility and White Institutional Presence: An Exploration of White Students’ of Race-Talk at a Traditionally White Institution,” *Howard Journal of Communications* (2017): 1-18.

¹⁶Susan Edelman, Selim Algar, Aaron Feis, “Richard Carranza held ‘white-supremacy culture’ training for school admins,” *New York Post*, May 20, 2019; Rich Calder, Bruce Golding, “White privilege’ survey posted in mostly minority school in Manhattan,” *New York Post*, June 23, 2019.

¹⁷University of California Microaggression List, posted on CACM Now, <https://sites.google.com/site/cacmnow/university-of-california-microaggression-lisy>

the HBCUs. In an era of structural state budgetary cutbacks, however, a tough examination of the viability of publicly supported HBCUs, rather than largess, is required. Additionally, Warren, Kamala Harris, U.S. Senator Cory Booker, former U.S. HUD Commissioner Julian Castro, Marianne Williamson, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (NY), and U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke (TX) all endorsed, with various levels of enthusiasm, reparation payments to blacks.

A veritable mountain of research over the last twenty years indicates that marriage status is the central factor in whether Americans of any race attain social mobility.¹⁸ That between 65 and 72 percent of black children under the age of 18 live with only one parent strongly suggests that the lack of conformity to middle-class norms, rather than anti-black racism, is the most powerful inhibitor of black economic parity.¹⁹ The emphasis of the black political class on racially exclusionary social policies is, to use perhaps the least graceless term available, misdirected.

In a brutally competitive world, social cohesion is required for prosperity, and a vibrant entrepreneurial private sector must not be made subservient to identity politics. Global competitors such as China, South Korea, and Japan are colorblind; they do not see hyphenated Americans, but recognize one America as an economic competitor and marketplace. America's historical ability to adapt economically, socially, politically, and educationally has most often prevailed in an assimilated environment based on individualism and a commitment to equality under the law. These ideals were set forth by our Founding Fathers and contained in our founding documents. If the U.S. is to rise above the challenges posed by both the globalized economy and continuing domestic multiculturalist agitation, it must eliminate its ethnic and racial silos and reinvigorate its commitment to our founding ideals.

¹⁸Glenn T. Stanton, "The Research Proves The No. 1 Social Justice Imperative Is Marriage," *The Federalist*, November 3, 2017, <https://thefederalist.com/2017/11/03/research-proves-no-1-social-justice-imperative-marriage/>

¹⁹Zenitha Prince, "Census Bureau: Higher Percentage of Black Children Live with Single Mothers," *Afro: The Black Media Authority*, December 31, 2016, <https://www.afro.com/census-bureau-higher-percentage-black-children-live-single-mothers/>.